

DELIVERING a ready-to-build construction site:

The feedback I received was from both the private sector and public sector. This feedback offers an update on private industries' views about how OBO's new objectives are being received and how other government entities are handling the delivery of construction sites. Some of the feedback, which I received from the public and private sector, may be redundant to what OBO is already doing, or may not be applicable to OBO construction, but will hopefully provide feedback that will assure OBO that they are thinking on the same lines of other Government entities and private sector contractors.

Overall, the private sector is pleased with the changes they've seen with OBO thus far and think that the system is improving. People were happy to hear that there are forums such as the IAP, which seek out opinions from not only other agencies, but from the private sector as well. They have ideas and thoughts on the current process and offered ideas to help accelerate the process to complete projects at a faster pace.

Security was a common concern throughout most of the discussions that took place. One government agency established a security center of excellence to provide assistance with setting up security and ensuring safety during the initial phases of the on-site work. The government agency uses existing infrastructure if possible to set up their security themselves, for security purposes, and then allow the contractors to proceed.

Feedback that I received about the document provided by Peter McNamara said that it hit on the key issues with remote site issues for construction ready projects. One piece that private industry sensed that it was lacking was a security related checklist of items, i.e. blast criteria, set back minimums. (Also redundant utility system provisions are becoming the norm as well as construct-ability issues specific to the sites.)

The rest of the feedback, I will provide to you in order of the slides:

What is a site ready for construction now?

Sufficient Size and shape to accommodate the program -

Contractors were happy to see that there was a checklist of items to assure this was being completed by the OBO. Expediting this process will assure that the project begins on time and without reworking the design.

Utility Infrastructure is in place and at the site's boundary –

The private sector felt that this would be an excellent way to get projects started on the right foot, if completed for every project. With the utilities infrastructure in place, contractors can use the permit and set up their temporary offices right away. Some ideas about how the utilities should arrive were given to expedite the construction process:

- Make sure that the power/water/sewer/gas lines are compatible with what the site designs will call for. Also making sure that the utilities have the right size and capacity to run what the building is going to need. Having to retrofit and start making things compatible take up time and money.

- A way to avoid disputes, additional tasks, and change orders and to save time and money is to have the local contractors put in the utilities to fit with US/OBO standards. This way, when the utilities are inherited, the contractor knows what/how things are connected. If the local contractor lacks the knowledge or capabilities to perform to US standards, US contractors would like to see OBO make the necessary adjustments, arrangements, and/or provide a plan to convert the local work to US/OBO standards before the contractor gets the site.
- Contractors performing CONUS works obtain “will serve” letters from utilities providers, as part of the site plan approval process. An idea would be to implement a similar concept in the evaluation process in order to ensure that the utilities can be brought to the site’s boundaries and outline the process. This can get the thought process started with foreign utility companies or governments.

Zoning/Planning Approvals in place –

A suggestion from the private sector was to ensure that the start of the NOB (New Office Building) permit application started at the time of the grading. That application process would ideally begin when the test/fit site is complete – before the design phase is started. This could shave off 3-6 months off of the process and allow the construction company to bid lower not having to wait as long for these permits to be in place.

Roads/Access in place –

All believe that this is helpful. To get a local contractor to perform this job is the best way to get this done. The access road doesn’t have to be a final product – just a way to make getting site materials in place by all contractors much easier. Then, OBO could include the finishing of the road in the construction procurement. Have the access road be a two phase project.

Clear Title –

All negotiations and transactions should be in place before the contractors show up.

Another Government agency, which performs construction projects overseas, uses a Memorandum of Agreement with foreign Governments, recently developed for construction sites. This document serves as a Right of Entry (within 30 days) to begin construction activity. Verifying ownership in countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo, Kuwait, etc., is very difficult. The Government entity team does not like to begin construction activities before ownership is verified. Oftentimes, individuals provide ownership papers only to discover later...papers were fraudulent. An example MOA places burden on Afghan government to determine true ownership. NOTE: (Except for US Embassy buildings and surrounding land). US Government does not own land in Afghanistan or Iraq. (Or any of the other countries mentioned above.) The US will LEASE buildings and/or land for US campsites or obtain RIGHT OF ENTRY for construction specifically, for period required for construction

Clear of squatters, occupants, buildings, and foundations –

One government source cited that they welcomed some existing buildings and foundations. It was a simpler process to convert existing infrastructure to US standards than to start fresh. The issue being how well is the existing structures trusted. Most of the time where buildings currently exist, there is usually existing utility infrastructure. This gives a more a faster ramp up time to begin the construction phase.

Clear of all debris -

No feedback given – all agree this is needed/wanted.

Clear of Environmental, historical, cultural or archeological issues –

Environmental permitting is usually one of the last permits to be obtained – a suggestion would be to start this process as soon as possible in order to leave enough time in case locals protest or fight issues such as underground fuel storage.

Clear of UXO –

No feedback given – all agree this is needed/wanted.

No subsurface, flood or other natural hazard issues –

No feedback given – all agree this is needed/wanted.

The reality as to why they are not normally available

Site availability – the contractors understand that delivering a site ready for construction isn't always a possibility – there are processes that can help the situations and environments for contractors to work with:

- Having the work completed in stages and having only one contractor at a time work on each site would allow more room for the contractors to operate, especially on the smaller sites.
- Having the work completed in stages and having only one contractor at a time work on each site would make
- Planning the NOB has improved significantly. Having the SRP (space requirements) allowed contractors to bid more effectively – having the floor plans helped tremendously and cause bid pricing to go down.
- Find a way to improve the NOB approval process to get more efficient construction – the critical path goes through the NOB approval process.
- Having continuity of personnel is very helpful. Having a project representative at the each site throughout all parts of the process helps answer contractor questions – some jobs with language barriers with local contractors lead to data getting lost in the translation. A suggestion was to have RFP language that includes bidding the presence of someone there throughout the process (from beginning to end). This could significantly help streamline the job and get questions answered immediately.

Examples of site conditions – if there is limited infrastructure/utilities, come up with a plan and begin to implement a solution. The utilities should be in place before the construction contractors arrive.

- Some contractors have to bid high because utility companies haven't been able to give data needed to bid accurately. The local authorities may not know how or where the utility lines are so contractors are bidding contingency. Can save money if OBO finds out where utilities are coming from before the procurement process.
- Topography– all contractors agree that a flat space is the easiest to build upon

OBO uses various methods to prepare a site for construction

Breaking down the site preparation job into smaller pieces is creating problems. Lesser-qualified contractors are working to prepare the site. Prices are going up because subcontractors are getting less work, thus need to make more off of each job.

The logistics of the site – having four contractors working at one time leaves no room to operate. Having one contractor on site per task would save money by increasing productivity and having less State Department people working in the ACF's (Access Controlled Facilities), one at a time as opposed to four.

There are too many processes to get the NOB approved. Taking 6 months to get NTP (Notice to proceed) leaves downtime on the project. A suggestion to speed up the process was to allow the piles and holes to be built between the NTP 1 and 2 phases. Piles are usually never the hold up on a project. Digging and piles don't have any security issues to begin with – allowing the foundation work to begin after NTP 1 can fast-track the project by 3-6 months.

Providing a separate contract and completion of dirt work – place the dirt there before the construction contractor arrives – this will save time and money – instead of breaking site packages – consolidate the structural work – a big problem is having 2 structural contractors on one small site. Spacing out the procurements and allowing time between start dates will help significantly

OBO's final delivery

All contractors agree that if OBO can deliver the items outlined in the presentation, OBO will save time and money with its practices, and allow its contractors to perform more efficiently. All current contractors are excited to see this transition to a more streamlined process.

